

This form should be used to record Executive decisions taken by Officers

Decision Ref. No:			
Service Area:	Destination and Culture	Date:	07-02-2023
Contact Name:	Dan Stone	Tel No:	07702338869
E-mail:	Dan.stone@bcpcouncil.gov.uk		
Subject:	Bournemouth Indoor Bowls Centre (BIBC)		
Decision taken:			
<p>To cease the indoor bowls service at the BIBC and identify arrangements for short- and long-term use of the space to deliver leisure activities that support a range of demographics within the community.</p>			
Reasons for the decision:			
<p>To remove the budget pressure connected with the indoor bowls service at the BIBC.</p>			
<p>The BCP Indoor Bowls needs assessment identified that we currently exceed capacity in terms of facilities to meet the demands of indoor bowling across the authority. The club currently using the BIBC have a declining membership which has resulted in the budget pressure.</p>			
<p>The East Dorset and Poole Dolphin indoor bowls facilities are performing well and have the capacity for the existing Bournemouth Indoor Bowls Club to transfer over whilst allowing more than enough capacity to grow and meet the local demands of the activity in the future. Many of the Bournemouth Indoor Bowls club members have already taken up negotiated discounted joining fees and transferred to these alternative clubs.</p>			
<p>To meet the objectives of the Boscombe Towns Fund business case, we need to introduce sustainable, viable and accessible services for a wider demographic. The indoor bowls service is in decline and restricts further activity within the bowls hall. By removing</p>			

this service we have the opportunity to introduce multiple services and activities to vastly increase weekly footfall and tackle inactivity figures in the area.

Background:

The BIBC was purchased via the Boscombe Towns Fund bid in March 2022. The asset forms part of the Leisure Services portfolio and is managed internally by the manager of Two Riversmeet Leisure Complex.

Upon completion of the purchase the bowls club currently using the facility were advised that they would face no service interruption for a period of 12 months. Our aim was to utilise the first year to understand the business and services. We quickly established following the Q1 accounts there was a significant budget pressure attached to the inherited business model. The budget pressure was mostly due to the declining membership and use of the indoor bowls hall and catering services. Whilst the indoor bowls services were maintained as promised, the catering services were reduced from May 2022 as we attempted to mitigate the budget pressure. We also invested in an upgrade of the function room to encourage new bookings and increased revenue. This was a success as we now have a sustainable and viable external play group service hiring the function room.

Despite all attempts to reduce costs, support the existing services and increase bookings a significant budget pressure remained.

In July 2022 we commissioned Strategic Leisure Consultants to undertake a review of the indoor bowls needs and demands across BCP and advise of future use arrangements for the BIBC facility. The consultants engaged with the national governing body, existing and other local bowls clubs throughout this review.

In September 2022, all services were advised of the wider budget pressures across BCP and were asked to submit cost saving proposals. We advised that by removing the indoor bowls service at the BIBC we could make a saving of up to £80,000.00 in the 2023/24 financial year.

This proposal was accepted at CMB and the bowls club were advised in October 2022 that the indoor bowls service would be paused from April 1st 2023. This saving has been

achieved primarily by reducing the staffing and utility costs when running the bowls hall and services. To offer some context, we are having to pay two or three members of staff equating to up to 21 hours per day whilst keeping the bowls hall lights and heating on between 9am-9pm during peak periods. This is simply not sustainable or viable and has resulted in a financial pressure for the authority.

The break-even business plan consists of a skeleton rota from the leisure team to ensure we comply with facility management regulations whilst our Skills and Learning colleagues take more responsibility in relation to customer access to the building. The income generated from Skills and Learning, AFCB home game catering and function room hire alongside the cost reductions will remove the financial pressure.

The terminology of "paused" was agreed until we awaited the outcome of the Strategic Leisure Consultancy report. The final report was received in February 2023 and advised that we currently exceed capacity in terms of facilities to meet the demands of indoor bowling across the authority and that we should give the club notice.

Upon giving formal notice to the Bournemouth Indoor Bowls Club, we have an opportunity to introduce some short-term use activities into the main hall and improve the budget position further. We are proposing to introduce activities and groups which have adequate supervision, qualifications, and experience to meet set criteria within a risk assessment, therefore not impacting the cost savings identified within the 2023/24 business plan.

The table below advises of some of the activities we would look to offer and the wider demographical benefit this would have for the community.

Activity	Target demographic
Mini Monkeys Baby sensory Mini Soccer Rugby tots	Under 5 years
Cheerleading Gymnastics AFCB Community Soccer School holiday clubs	5-16 years
Skills and Learning AFCB Cherries family bar Yoga	16 years plus

Pilates	
Chair fit exercise classes	50 years plus
Tai Chi classes	
Yoga	
Pilates	
Gentle circuits	
Otago exercise classes	

The long term use of the facility will be determined as part of the wider harmonisation of leisure centres project. The future management model and capital investment requirements are yet to be determined.

Consultations undertaken:

Officers have been in regular consultation with the current users of the facility as have the external consultants Strategic Leisure.

Officers negotiated reduced annual fees at the alternative indoor bowls facilities for the users of the BIBC enabling the opportunity to continue participation in this activity. Many users have already taken up this opportunity.

The decision to “pause” the service from April 2023 was made by Officers and the Portfolio Holder due to the wider council budget pressures of the 2023/24 financial year.

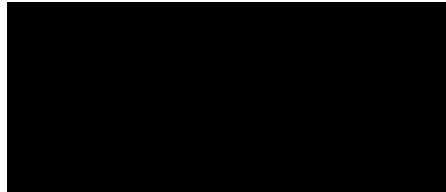
Finance and Resourcing Implications:

This decision is included on list one of the 2023/24 MTFP (Ref 61 £80k). This will remove the budget pressure within the service and enable Officers the opportunity to increase revenue with alternative use arrangements.

Name: Adam Richens

Date: 27 February 2023

Signature (of Chief Finance Officer):



Legal Implications:

Although the indoor bowls service is not a statutory service, Legal Services have enquired as to whether the Council would be breaching any contractual obligations by closing the service. Legal Services have reviewed the Conditions of Hire and it would appear that the Council has not breached any obligations – the clause concerning booking cancellations and closure of the BIBC is clause 3c of the Conditions of Hire which states:

“The Council reserves the right to cancel any booking or to close or prohibit the use of the Centre, at its discretion. Any hire charge paid in respect of the booking which has been so cancelled shall be refunded. The Council shall not be liable for any expenditure incurred or loss sustained directly or indirectly by the Hirer or any other person arising from any booking that is cancelled. The Council reserves the right to rearrange bookings in order to stage tournaments, competitions or other special events, or in the event of repairs or renovation works being carried out to the Centre or in the event of a civil emergency. Bookings relate to the agreed period of hire only and the Council cannot guarantee that further continuation bookings will be available.”

In addition, the Background section of this Officer Decision Record mentions an “inherited business model” and states that at the time the BIBC was purchased in March 2022, the bowls club currently using the facility was advised that it would face no service interruption for a period of 12 months. Legal Services have enquired as to what form this undertaking by the Council took and whether it was formally documented in writing. Legal Services have been informed that this was agreed before the purchase via the Bournemouth Towns Fun King’s Park Activity & Learning Hub Business Case and confirmed verbally to the BIBC in April 2022 – the club has no ownership or rights over use, there was no contractual obligation to provide an indoor bowls service when the BIBC was purchased and the Council’s undertaking was simply a gesture of goodwill for 12 months.

Finally, the Background section of this Officer Decision Record mentions “having to pay two or three members of staff equating to up to 21 hours per day”, so Legal Services have enquired into potential employment law implications if there is a plan to make these

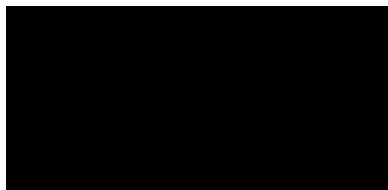
individuals redundant. However, Legal Services have been informed that the vacancies are being covered by Two Riversmeet casual employees until 1 April 2023 when the indoor bowls service will cease, and the one remaining contracted employee will still be required at the BIBC.

In conclusion, it appears that the Council has breached no statutory or contractual obligation by closing the indoor bowls service. The Council owns the BIBC and can therefore use the bowls hall for any sporting activities.

Name: Susan Zeiss

Date: 27/02/2023

Signature (of Monitoring Officer)



Risk Assessment:

Officers negotiated reduced annual fees at the alternative indoor bowls facilities for the users of the BIBC enabling the opportunity to continue participation in this activity. Many users have already taken up this opportunity.

We are proposing to introduce activities and groups which have adequate supervision, qualifications, and experience to meet set criteria within a risk assessment, therefore not impacting the cost savings identified within the 2023/24 business plan.

Name:

Date:

Signature (of Officer Completing Assessment):

Impact Assessments:

This decision will impact around 130 indoor bowlers although most have and will use alternative venues. It accepted that some may not be able to travel to the alternative venues. Alternative activities for this demographic will be considered within the future use arrangements.

Information for publication

Background Papers

Boscombe Towns Fund Business Case
Strategic Leisure report
Built Facilities Review

Any declaration of interest by the
Officer responsible for the decision

Nature of Interest

Yes / No*

Note: No Officer having an personal financial interest in any matter should take a decision on that matter. Other interests of a non-disqualifying matter should be recorded here.

Any conflict of
interest declared
by a Cabinet

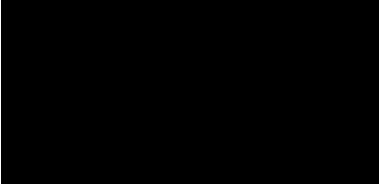
Name of
Cabinet

Nature of
interest

Details of any
dispensation
granted by the
Monitoring Officer

Member who is
consulted by the

Member

Officer taking the decision			
Yes / No*			
<p>Decision taken by: Jess Gibbons</p> <p>Signature:  Date of Decision: 3 March 23</p> <p>Date Decision Effective:</p> <p>Date of Publication of record of decision: (to be inserted by Democratic Services)</p>			

Note: A record of this decision should be kept by the Service Area within which the decision falls